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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: Eric VAULOT) Group Art Unit:1734
SERIAL NO: 10/089,593) Examiner: Sing P. Chan
FILED: August 6, 2002) **EXPEDITED PROCEDURE**
TITLE: PRINTED WELDABLE FLEXIBLE POLYMER MATERIAL FOR) **AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL**
PRODUCING STRETCHED STRUCTURES SUCH AS FALSE
CEILINGS

AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) ~~Prefabricated~~ A prefabricated material in the form of one or more thin flexible polymer sheets for making hot-tensioned structures in respective frames, each hot-tensioned structure being encompassed by one of the respective frames to form a false ceiling or a false wall, the material comprising being characterized in that it carries direct printing of designs of shapes and dimensions that are predetermined once the material is hot-tensioned

one or more thin flexible sheets;

each sheet being sized and configured to be retained in a respective frame in a tensioned state at an ambient temperature;

each sheet including directed printing of predetermined designs of shapes and dimensions while each sheet is in said tensioned state.

2. (currently amended) The material according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that it wherein the material~~ is selected from the group comprising thermoplastic polymers including plasticized polyvinyl chloride and polymers derived therefrom as superchlorinated vinyl chloride, polyvinylidene chloride, and copolymers of vinyl chloride and polyvinylidene chloride.

3. (currently amended) The material according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that it wherein the material~~ is a multilayer material.

4. (currently amended) The material according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that it wherein the material~~ is mono- or bi-oriented.

5. (withdrawn) A method of making a hot-tensioned false ceiling, by hot-tensioning a material of the kind presented in claim 1, in a false ceiling obtained by assembling rails, the method being characterized in that it comprises:

- a step of selecting designs to be printed on the material, said designs being mono- or polychromatic and being capable of being modified in shape, color, proportions, and dispositions, said designs being digitized and recorded in a computer memory of a system for controlling a printing machine; and

- a step of printing the selected design on the flexible polymer material in sheet form.

6. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 5, characterized in that it includes a step of printing a final design as selected by the user on paper.

7. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 6, characterized in that the printing is performed by means of a silkscreen printing machine.

8. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 6, characterized in that the printing is performed by means of a digital ink jet machine.

9. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 6, characterized in that the printing is performed on a plurality of bonded-together strips of material, and in particular is performed over the zones in which the strips are bonded together edge to edge.

10. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 6, characterized in that the printing is performed on each strip of material with the strips being assembled together by bonding performed after the printing.

11. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 10, characterized in that it includes a step of predeforming the design to be printed on the flexible polymer material, the predeformation taking account of differential lengthening of the printed material during hot-tensioning, said predeformation substantially compensating for distortion in the design caused by the material being hot-tensioned and thus ensuring that a properly proportioned design is obtained on the tensioned printed material.

12. (withdrawn) A false ceiling obtained by implementing the method presented in claim 5, characterized in that a catch member is defined in the frame of the false ceiling, the catch member being capable of receiving a margin member disposed along the periphery of the sheet of flexible polymer material that is hot-tensioned in said frame.

13. (withdrawn) A false ceiling according to claim 12, characterized in that the margin member is bonded close to the peripheral edge of the tensioned sheet, said bonding being hidden from view by portions of the rails of the frame.

14. (currently amended) The material according to claim 2, characterized in that it wherein the material is a multilayer material.

15. (currently amended) The material according to claim 2, ~~characterized in that it~~
wherein the material is mono- or bi-oriented.
16. (currently amended) The material according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that it~~
wherein the material is mono- or bi-oriented.
17. (withdrawn) A method of making a hot-tensioned false ceiling, by hot-tensioning a material of the kind presented in claim 2, in a false ceiling obtained by assembling rails, the method being characterized in that it comprises:
- a step of selecting designs to be printed on the material, said designs being mono- or polychromatic and being capable of being modified in shape, color, proportions, and dispositions, said designs being digitized and recorded in a computer memory of a system for controlling a printing machine; and
 - a step of printing the selected design on the flexible polymer material in sheet form.
18. (withdrawn) A method of making a hot-tensioned false ceiling, by hot-tensioning a material of the kind presented in claim 3, in a false ceiling obtained by assembling rails, the method of being characterized in that it comprises:
- a step of selecting designs to be printed on the material, said designs being mono- or polychromatic and being capable of being modified in shape, color, proportions, and dispositions, said designs being digitized and recorded in a computer memory of a system for controlling a printing machine; and
 - a step of printing the selected design on the flexible polymer material in sheet form.
19. (withdrawn) A method of making a hot-tensioned false ceiling, by hot-tensioning a material of the kind presented in claim 4, in a false ceiling obtained by assembling rails, the method being characterized in that it comprises:
- a step of selecting designs to be printed on the material, said designs being mono- or polychromatic and being capable of being modified in shape, color, proportions, and dispositions, said designs being digitized and recorded in a computer memory of a system for controlling a printing machine; and
 - a step of printing the selected design on the flexible polymer material in sheet form.
20. (withdrawn) A method of making a hot-tensioned false ceiling, by hot-tensioning a material of the kind presented in claim 19, in a false ceiling obtained by assembling rails, the method being characterized in that it comprises:

- a step of selecting designs to be printed on the material, said designs being mono- or polychromatic and being capable of being modified in shape, color, proportions, and dispositions, said designs being digitized and recorded in a computer memory of a system for controlling a printing machine;

- a step of printing the selected design on the flexible polymer material in sheet form; and

- a step of printing a final design as selected by the user on paper by means of one of a silkscreen printing machine or a digital ink jet machine.

21. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 20, characterized in that the printing is performed on a plurality of bonded-together strips of material, and in particular is performed over the zones in which the strips are bonded together edge to edge.

22. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 20, characterized in that:

- the printing is performed on each strip of material with the strips being assembled together by bonding performed after the printing;

- it includes a step of predeforming the design to be printed on the flexible polymer material, the predeformation taking account of differential lengthening of the printed material during hot-tensioning, said predeformation substantially compensating for distortion in the design caused by the material being hot-tensioned and thus ensuring that a properly proportioned design is obtained on the tensioned printed material.

23. (withdrawn) A false ceiling obtained by implementing the method presented in claim 20, characterized in that:

- a catch member is defined in the frame of the false ceiling, the catch member being capable of receiving a margin member disposed along the periphery of the sheet of flexible polymer material that is hot-tensioned in said frame;

- the margin member is bonded close to the peripheral edge of the tensioned sheet, said bonding being hidden from view by portions of the rails of the frame.

24. (withdrawn) A false ceiling obtained by implementing the method presented in claim 21, characterized in that:

- a catch member is defined in the frame of the false ceiling, the catch member being capable of receiving a margin member disposed along the periphery of the sheet of flexible polymer material that is hot-tensioned in said frame;

- the margin member is bonded close to the peripheral edge of the tensioned sheet, said bonding being hidden from view by portions of the rails of the frame.

25. (withdrawn) A false ceiling obtained by implementing the method presented in claim 22, characterized in that:

a catch member is defined in the frame of the false ceiling, the catch member being capable of receiving a margin member disposed along the periphery of the sheet of flexible polymer material that is hot-tensioned in said frame;

the margin member is bonded close to the peripheral edge of the tensioned sheet, said bonding being hidden from view by portions of the rails of the frame.

26. (new) A prefabricated material for making hot-tensioned structures to form a false ceiling or a false wall, the material comprising:

one or more thin flexible sheets;

each sheet being sized and configured to be retained in a respective frame in a tensioned state at an ambient temperature;

each sheet including direct printing of predeformed designs of shapes and dimensions, the predeformed designs taking account of differential lengthening of the printed material during hot-tensioning, said predeformed designs substantially compensating for distortion in the design caused by the being hot-tensioned, and thus ensuring that a properly proportioned design is obtained on the tensioned printed material.

27. (new) The material according to claim 26, wherein multiple sheets having said predeformed designs printed thereon are assembled together by bonding.

28. (new) The material according to claim 26, wherein the material is selected from the group comprising thermoplastic polymers including plasticized polyvinyl chloride and polymers derived therefrom as superchlorinated vinyl chloride, polyvinylidene chloride, and copolymers of vinyl chloride and polyvinylidene chloride.

29. (new) The material according to claim 26, wherein the material is a multilayer material.

30. (new) The material according to claim 26, wherein the material is mono- or bi-oriented.